

ASSOCIATION FOR INFORMAL LOGIC AND CRITICAL THINKING (AILACT) *NEWSLETTER*

August 2023

Contents

1. From the Editor
2. From the President
3. AILACT @APA: updates and calls for submissions
4. AILACT Essay Prize: final call for submissions
5. New AILACT Speakers Forum
6. *Inquiry* Needs a New Home!
7. Membership Form

From the Editor

Greetings, Newsletter readers!

In this issue you'll find a statement from the President, a revised Membership form for 2023, and a number of updates and announcements. In particular, note that the critical thinking journal *Inquiry* still needs a new Managing Editor; the deadline for this year's AILACT Essay prize is fast approaching; and AILACT is hosting a new Speakers Forum, beginning this Fall. So put that in your calendar, and consider contributing to the series with a talk of your own!

Any news or items of interest to the AILACT readership can be sent to me by December 1st for inclusion in the December Newsletter.

Best,
Pat Bondy
patrick.bondy@wichita.edu

PS. The April Newsletter included the following riddle:

Why is a raven like a writing desk?
—Mad Hatter, in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

By acclamation (and because I like it!), the winning answer comes from Kevin Possin:

A raven might well be like a writing desk “Because no raven is shaped like a non-raven-shaped writing desk,” as Pat suggested in the April *Newsletter*. Assuming that all ravens [R] are raven shaped [RS], no raven-shaped ravens [RS(R)] are like non-raven-shaped writing desks [non-RS(WD)]. The logically equivalent obverse of that would be that all RS(R) are like RS(WD). And that would be trivially true...of anything you might wish to place in the parentheses, by virtue of its then being RS. And when the assumption is false, i.e., when some R are non-RS (e.g., those ravens flattened out on the highway by a truck), they are again like writing desks in being non-RS, whether the WR are flattened by a truck or found with their usual shapes.

I do like the suggestion by Sam Loyd, that Edgar Allen Poe wrote on both. At the risk of appearing to approve of cruelty to animals, I would suggest that if you cut off 2 of their legs, they both fall over. I bet the Queen of Hearts would agree.

From the President

Dear Members,

The Board of Directors has met three times since my last report in the April *Newsletter*. And this time I am happy to say that we have made significant progress on our projects, including a new one.

1. We will begin our **AILACT Speakers Forum** on Sept. 8 at 11:00 US Eastern Time, with Sharon Bailin and Mark Battersby leading the discussion “Beyond Informal Logic: Teaching Critical Thinking as Inquiry.” I sent out an announcement and call for proposals for the Speakers Forum via AILACTD-L, which is reposted in this *Newsletter* and which you can access on our AILACT Website. It will be held every second Friday of the month and Zoom invitations will be sent out via AILACTD-L and ARGTHRY and posted on our Website. If you know of anyone else who would like an invitation or who would like to present, please notify Dona Warren [dwarren@uwsp.edu] or me [kpossin@winona.edu].
2. The **AILACT Essay Prize** deadline for submissions is fast approaching—Sept. 1. Along with doing his usual tasks of organizing and promoting the Essay Prize, Gilbert Plumer [plumerge@gmail.com] is also supervising submissions this year, filling in for Derek Allen, who passed away suddenly due to an accident. Derek was a wonderful man who did much for our Association and for our mission. Please take a moment to read his memorial on the AILACT Website.
3. Dona Warren has consented to be our **Webmaster**. She is in the process of updating the AILACT site and investigating various ways of modernizing it. This is a big project that is long overdue, so we are very appreciative. Our thanks to Steve Oswald, for being our past Webmaster and for providing Dona and me with a Zoom training session and a standing offer of support.
4. The **Member Area** of our Website has been discontinued: This was a separate website that was linked to our general AILACT site. It was paid for by Derek Allen and maintained and hosted

by a third party at Derek's considerable expense. It was drastically underutilized. So the Board decided not to take over its expenses after Derek's death.

5. On June 21, I sent out a call via AILACTD-L and ARGTHRY for a new **Managing Editor** and host institution for **INQUIRY: Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines**. We received 3 responses from interested parties. Frank Fair, the past Editor of the Journal, has met with all of them. Because taking on the challenge of resurrecting this Journal will take time, money, and resources, no one has committed to the project yet. If on second thought you are interested in learning more about the project, please see the announcement reposted in this *Newsletter*, and contact Frank Fair [psy_fkf@SHSU.EDU].

6. **AILACT has a new email address:** It is EmailAILACT@gmail.com. This account will be monitored by AILACT's President and Webmaster. It is a handy way to contact the Association directly, without sending a message out to the entire Membership, as is the case with the AILACTD-L discussion listserv.

Please contact me with any questions or suggestions. Wishing you the very best,

Kevin

AILACT @ APA

Eastern Division

AILACT Group Session APA Eastern Division Meeting January 2024 New York City
Organized by Jeff Buechner

The Uses and Limitations of ChatGPT in Critical Thinking, Argumentation and Elementary Logical Reasoning

ChatGPT is now routinely used throughout the world, in, e.g., business, medicine, and scientific research. However, in academia it has created a problem—student cheating. Some faculty have not thought about how to use ChatGPT productively in their classes, but, instead, have given much thought to the problem of how to prevent their students from using it to cheat. Our session will not examine the cheating problem. Instead, we will examine how ChatGPT can be productively used (and what are its limitations) in research work in and in teaching critical thinking, argumentation, and elementary logical reasoning.

Format for the AILACT Group Session: three speakers and a discussant. Each speaker will present a talk; the discussant will comment on talks both as they are given and during discussion.

Chair: Lloyd Carr (Professor Emeritus, Rivier University)

Invited Speaker: Ned Hall (Norman E. Vuilleumier Professor of Philosophy, Harvard University)

Invited Speaker: Nathan Bice (AI Software Engineer, Rockstar Games)

Speaker: Jeff Buechner (Associate Professor Rutgers University-Newark and Affiliated Research Scholar, The Saul Kripke Center, CUNY, The Graduate Center)

Invited Discussant: Adam Elga (Professor, Princeton University)

Central Division

The Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking is requesting papers for possible presentation at our 2024 Group Session (in conjunction with the APA Central Division meeting) on the topic of “Critical Thinking and the Age of Artificial Intelligence.”

Place: Astor Crown Plaza, New Orleans, LA

Time: Friday February 23th, 2024 from 7 – 10 PM

Chair: Thomas Brommage (Sam Houston State University)

AILACT invites submissions for our annual meeting in conjunction with the APA Central Division Meeting (2/21–2/24/2022 in New Orleans, LA). The topic for this year's session will be Critical Thinking in the Age of Artificial Intelligence.

Everyone is likely aware of the media coverage regarding Chat GPT-3 and other large language models, and the media predictions of how this technology will change our day-to-day lives. Unlike other areas of philosophy, most of us have been teaching alongside automated tools for at least the last 30 years (e.g., websites with tools to test the validity of syllogisms, truth-table generators, etc.). So, to the extent that the logic and critical thinking community has some familiarity with how to teach alongside these tools, the question of this session will be: What insight/advice do we have to offer the rest of the philosophical profession on how to teach in the dawning of (what seems to be) a new age of automated content generators?

Proposals on any topic with regard to the usefulness or dangers of teaching philosophical thinking in the coming “age of AI” will be accepted; but special consideration will be given to those which match the theme of the session.

Abstracts of proposals (300-500 words) with a tentative bibliography of sources should be submitted to Thomas Brommage (brommage@shsu.edu) by Friday, September 15th, 2022.

Pacific Division

CALL FOR PAPERS: AILACT @ the APA Pacific Division, March 20-23, 2024, Portland, OR
Deadline: September 25

We are now accepting proposals on any relevant topic for the Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking (AILACT) session to be held in conjunction with the upcoming Pacific Division meetings of the APA. Papers, papers-with-commentators, author-meets-critics, and panel discussions are all welcome. Send proposals or abstracts to ccusick@csufresno.edu by September 25th.

**Essay Prize in Informal Logic/Critical Thinking/Argumentation Theory
CALL FOR PAPERS**

The Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking (AILACT) invites submissions for the 2023 AILACT Essay Prize. This will be the 19th year that the prize has been offered.

- Value: \$700 U.S.
- The prize-winning paper, and any “honourable mention” paper, will be considered for publication in *Informal Logic* upon the conditions listed below.*
- Papers related to the teaching or theory of informal logic or critical thinking, and papers on argumentation theory, will be considered for the prize.
- There are no restrictions on authorship. Authors need not be members of AILACT but are encouraged to be or become dues-paying members, so that the prize award can continue.
- Previously unpublished papers, and papers published or accepted for publication between January 1, 2020 and September 1, 2023 are eligible. Maximum length: 6,000 words (exclusive of footnotes and bibliography). Authors may not submit the same paper, or a similar paper, more than once following the first submission.
- Entries will be assessed on the basis of their argument, scholarship, style, and importance to the field. There is a limit of one entry per author.
- The jury members for the 2023 AILACT essay prize, approved by the AILACT Board of Directors, are Geoffrey Goddu, Professor of Philosophy, University of Richmond; Sally Jackson, Professor of Communications, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Tim Kenyon, Humanities & Vice-President Research, Brock University. The jury's decision is final.
- To submit a paper, attach a PDF or MS Word document to an email with AILACT ESSAY ENTRY on the “subject” line and send it to Gilbert Plumer (plumerge@gmail.com). Include in the email your name, a mailing address, and the word-length of your paper exclusive of footnotes and bibliography. If the paper was published between January 1, 2020 and the date of its submission for the 2023 AILACT Essay Prize, please include in your email the name of the journal concerned, the year of publication, the volume number and issue number. Please send the paper ready for blind-reviewing (the author not identified on the paper or file containing the paper or in the description of the document’s properties that is part of the file, and self-identifying references removed from the text, notes, and bibliography). Each page should be numbered.
- The deadline for receipt of submissions is September 1, 2023. The winner will be announced by December 15, 2023. AILACT will publicize the name of the winner on its web site and at AILACT sessions held at American Philosophical Association divisional meetings in 2024.
- For further information about the essay prize, contact Gilbert Plumer (plumerge@gmail.com). For information about AILACT, visit our web site: <https://ailact.wordpress.com/>.

* The prize-winning paper, and any "honourable mention" paper, will be eligible for consideration for publication in *Informal Logic* if it has not already been published or accepted for publication elsewhere and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, and if the author consents to its consideration for publication in *Informal Logic*. The editors of *Informal Logic* will arrange for blind review of the paper if these conditions are met. The author will be expected to revise the paper in light of the reviewers' suggestions, or to justify not doing so.

The Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking is thrilled to announce:

The AILACT Speakers Forum

Featuring presenters and panelists on topics in **Critical Thinking and Informal Logic: theory, practice, and pedagogy**

Every second Friday of the month, at 11:00 Eastern Time

Sept. 8: Sharon Bailin (Simon Fraser University) and Mark Battersby (Capilano University)
“Beyond Informal Logic: Teaching Critical Thinking as Inquiry”

Oct. 13: Aiden Kestigian (ThinkerAnalytix, Harvard University)
“Systematizing Intellectual Empathy”

Nov. 10: Steve Oswald (University of Fribourg, Switzerland)
“An Experimental Approach to Some Rhetorical Effects of Insinuation”

Zoom Invitations, with Abstracts of the presentations, will be sent out via AILACTD-L and ARGTHRY, as well as being posted on the AILACT website [[AILACT.wordpress.com](https://ailact.wordpress.com)]

Hosted by AILACT Board Member Dona Warren (University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point) [dwarren@uwsp.edu]

Events will be recorded and archived on the AILACT YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@ailactvideos>

Please join us and please forward this on to others

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: Please consider being a speaker by sending an abstract of your topic to

Frank Fair [psy_fkf@SHSU.EDU] or Dona Warren [dwarren@uwsp.edu]

ADOPT THIS JOURNAL PLEASE!

INQUIRY: Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines has been languishing for some time now (publishing only one issue since 2016). This is the only journal dedicated to Critical Thinking theory, practice, assessment, and pedagogy across all disciplines. Many pillars of our CT/IL community have published historic articles and reflection pieces in *INQUIRY*, going back to the 1980s. And now the Journal needs a new home so as to thrive and advance the cause of Critical Thinking again.

Not long ago (2010-2016), Frank Fair was the Managing Editor, and Sam Houston State University was sponsor by providing release time for Frank and a modest publication budget of approximately \$3000. But when Frank retired and Thomas Brommage took over the role, Sam Houston stopped all support, and publication was necessarily halted.

It is time to resurrect this crucial and unique journal.

Please consider becoming Managing Editor and having your institution or department provide the needed modest support.

Tom Brommage will provide you with the Journal's backlog of submissions (in various stages of readiness) and files. The Philosophy Documentation Center will continue to do its marvelous job of formatting, indexing, and online publishing and archiving.

For more details on what being Managing Editor entails, please contact Tom [tjb039@SHSU.EDU] or Frank [psy_fkf@SHSU.EDU]. Both would be delighted to describe the job and provide continued assistance.

Thank you for considering doing this tremendous service for the promotion and enhancement of Critical Thinking and Informal Logic.

2023 AILACT MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

AILACT (the Association for Informal Logic & Critical Thinking) was formed in 1983 to promote research on, and teaching and testing of, informal logic and critical thinking at all levels; to increase the extent and quality of such research, teaching, and testing; and to facilitate discussion among its members. AILACT sponsors sessions at each APA divisional meeting and other meetings; has a Web site, <http://ailact.wordpress.com/> that provides a wide variety of information about AILACT, informal logic, and critical thinking, and posts papers and other members' materials; has an e-mail discussion list for discussion of topics of interest to members; and holds an annual essay prize competition.

- I would like to become a member of AILACT (US\$10 or equivalent)
- I would like to renew my membership (US\$10 or equivalent)
- I would (also) like to make a tax-deductible donation to AILACT (a 501c3 organization)
- I am a student and would like to become a member of AILACT (Fees waived)

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Institutional affiliation (if any): _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Payment Options:

Check: Make checks (US or Canadian only) payable to AILACT

Credit Card Payment: Please deduct US \$_____ from

Credit Card: Visa MasterCard

Account Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

PayPal: log in to your account and send the payment to Don Hatcher's email address (dhatcher@bakeru.edu). PayPal will indicate that your payment is to AILACT.

Mail to: Donald Hatcher, AILACT Treasurer, Department of Humanities, Baker University, Baldwin City, KS 66006 USA. Email: dhatcher@bakeru.edu

As a member, your email address will be added to the AILACTD-L discussion list, used to send the AILACT *Newsletter* and announcements and to post items for discussion and responses. Members can unsubscribe at any time.